

-4078

ELY CULBERTSON



October 10, 1951

Mr. Allen W. Dulles  
P. O. Box 1513, Main Post Office  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

I am sending enclosed a memorandum on my idea for the anonymous letters project which we discussed last week.

I had a very enjoyable visit with you. Please let me know if at any time I can be of any further use. Also, please convey my kindest regards to General Smith, whom I admire highly. If more people understood communist Russia as well as he and you, I would not worry as much as I do.

Sincerely and with kindest regards,

*Ely Culbertson*  
Ely Culbertson

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Allen W. Dulles  
 From: Ely Culbertson  
 Re: Anonymous Letters project

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October 9, 1951

Purpose : To secure by means of a new method additional and valuable information for national defense against potential communist aggressors.

Background : Anonymous letters have always been an important source of information to police and other governmental authorities; this in spite of the fact that anonymity is also used to convey false information by cranks or for revenge. With the rise of the totalitarian police states, the volume and the importance of anonymous letters has been greatly increased. I assume that a special department exists in the CIA in America and abroad under experts, to separate the wheat from the anonymous chaff and to utilize the technic of correlation with information obtained elsewhere for determination of the veracity and importance of the anonymous information. However, I believe it is possible greatly to increase the volume and the value of the anonymous information, by the following method:

The Proposal : This proposal offers a possible solution to the following problem:

- a) It will guarantee an anonymous informant against any possibility of detection (by the MVD); and at the same time
- b) it will guarantee to the anonymous informant a reward by the U.S. for the information. The reward may be monetary (in proportion to the value of the information -- to be determined by the CIA); or it may be an entry into the U.S., or some other valuable consideration with or without monetary reward. Furthermore, the anonymous informant will be certain to receive this reward without running the risk of identifying himself with any personal contact at the time he supplies the information. Here is the proposal:

1) The United States will announce through Voice of America and other channels that it will reward any anonymous informant, it being understood that the U.S. authorities reserve the full right to determine the reward, if any, and its amount.

2) To secure the reward, the anonymous informant must identify himself. To do so, it will be sufficient for him to either recite by heart the anonymous letter he previously sent or to indicate his knowledge of the contents of the anonymous letter by some code devised by himself. For instance, he may say that the fifth line contains seven a's and the sixth line three f's; or even that the letter contains a code word. In this manner it will be possible for the original sender of the anonymous letter to identify himself beyond any doubt. There will be a time limit of five years, or thereabouts, to claim the reward, and, of course, the reward could only be claimed when that person or his own secretly appointed agent is outside the iron curtain territory.

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3) As the first step in the application of the new method, the CIA should concentrate on the thousands of officials employed by Soviet Russia and her satellites outside communist territory, i.e., embassies, consulates, trade organizations. Here there will be found a number of even high Russian officials who will be tempted to send anonymous information of great value by the simple expedient of dropping the anonymous letter in any mail box addressed to the U.S. Embassy or to a box number in Washington. For instance, if he were a code official in charge of a secret Russian code, and if he hated Stalin and wanted to make a nice nest-egg in the United States for some future time, he would send such code to the U.S. Government, since he would be certain not to be detected through any personal contact, and, at the same time, would be guaranteed by the U.S. Government of a substantial reward.

There is no doubt in my mind that this method would work outside the iron curtain countries, and might prove to be most valuable. For this reason alone it should be tried. Of course, the information that the U.S. Government will reward secret informants must be carefully phrased.

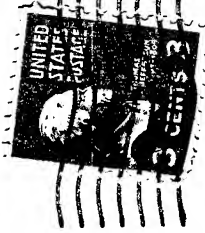
This method could also be extended to Soviet Russia's satellites states and even (with more difficulty) to Soviet Russia itself. Here the anonymous informant would require an accomplice to post his letter outside the strict censorship zone. This accomplice, of course, need not carry the letter on his person, since he could memorize it and write it later himself. The accomplice might be a soldier, a sailor, or any one of the thousands of Russian officials residing, say, in eastern Germany.

In addition to the foregoing, the anonymous method offers many variations. For instance, an anonymous informant outside the communist countries may give a code name in his letter or even work out a simple code for communications. The CIA could then communicate with him through newspaper ads.

Like most of those whose profession is that of system-maker, there is a possibility that I have missed some enormous objection to this proposal. In all events, I am ready to be of any further service.

  
Ely Culbertson

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*Adm*

Mr. Allen W. Dulles  
P. O. Box 1513  
Main Post Office  
Washington, D. C.

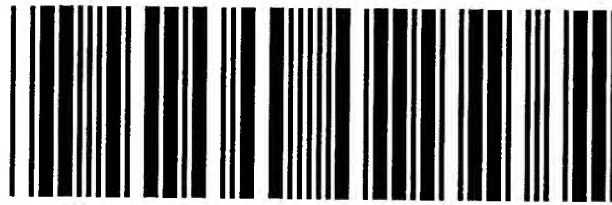
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DOCUMENT SEPARATOR SHEET

Executive Registry

2-3872

29 November 1951

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Proposal of Ely Culbertson

1. The proposal made by Mr. Ely Culbertson in his letter to you, October 9, 1951, for the use of anonymous informants has received careful consideration.

2. In view of the intelligence aspects of this proposal, it was referred by us to the Russian Division of OSO for their recommendations.

3. Both the Russian Division, OSO, and the Psychological Staff Division feel that the type of operation outlined by Mr. Culbertson is unsuited to CIA.



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Chief, Psychological Division

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## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Officer designations should be used in the "TO" column. Under each comment a line should be drawn across sheet and each comment numbered to correspond with the number in the "TO" column. Each officer should initial (check mark insufficient) before further routing. This Routing and Record Sheet should be returned to Registry.

FROM:

C/PY

NO.

61417

DATE

29 November 1951

TO	ROOM NO.	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS
		REC'D	FWD'D		
1. <i>DD/Plans</i>		<i>3 Dec.</i>	<i>12 Dec.</i>	<i>CDT</i>	
2. <i>DDCI</i>					
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2. DD/P has attached  
1 draft reply  
for dispatch

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